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| AUTHOR | Arnold, Gerald |
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ABSTRACT

To identify behavioral and attitudinal differences between students who became high school dropouts and students who remained in school, sophomores from Illinois who participated in the National High School and Beyond Study (N=1,950) were interviewed and tested. Their responses were weighted to represent the total sophomore enrollment for Illinois and a profile of student behavioral and attitudinal characteristics was compiled. In 1982, participants from the 1980 study completed follow-up questionnaires. A portion of their responses (N=166) were weighted to represent an estimated number of respondents who would drop out of school by the spring of 1982. Comparison of dropout profiles with profiles of students who continued high school showed that dropouts were more likely to report failing academically, being absent or tardy, lack of interest in school, and being subject to disciplinary actions. Of the Hispanic and Black Illinois sophomores, 25 percent eventually dropped out, exceeding the rates of other racial-ethnic groups and the national rates for these groups. Although male students proportionally were more likely to drop out than females, over one-half the dropouts were females. Of these, over one-third reported having one or more children. The findings indicate that poor academic performance, absence from school for 3 or more days, lack of high school completion by one or both parents, and pregnancy for females are warning signals for students at-risk for dropping out. (Fifteen data tables presenting the profile comparisons are included.) (MCF)

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# A PROFILE OF ILLINOIS DROPOUTS

Illinois State Board of Education

Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Research and Statistics Section

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Walter W. Naumer, Jr.
Chairman

Ted Sanders
State Superintendent of Education

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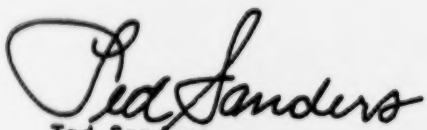
## Foreword

This paper discusses the behavioral and attitudinal differences between students who became high school dropouts and students who remained in school. Sophomores from Illinois who participated in the national High School and Beyond Study were interviewed in 1980. Their responses were compiled into a profile of student behavioral and attitudinal characteristics. A follow up study in 1982 identified those sophomores who eventually dropped out of school.

This report was prepared by Gerald Arnold, Research and Statistics Section, Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation. The interpretations and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the State Board of Education.



Ted Sanders
State Superintendent of Education

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## Introduction

In 1980, a representative sample of Illinois sophomores participated in the national High School and Beyond Study. These students were interviewed and tested so that a national profile of sophomores could be constructed. In 1982, participants in the 1980 survey were contacted again. Some participants had become high school dropouts. When the student profiles of dropouts were compared with the profiles of students who continued high school, differences in attitudinal and behavioral characteristics were observed. The purpose of this report is to describe these differences so that a better understanding of at-risk youth could be developed.

This report describes risk factors associated with the 1980 Illinois sophomores who dropped out of school before the spring of 1982. The sample of dropouts in the High School and Beyond Study included three groups.

1. Participants in the 1980 sophomore survey identified by local school administrators as dropouts according to the following criteria:
   a) student was absent from school 20 or more consecutive days, and
   b) student planned not to return to school.

2. Participants in the 1980 sophomore survey identified by school administrators as school attenders, but who identified themselves as dropouts during the 1982 follow-up survey.

3. Nonparticipants to the 1980 sophomore survey who met the dropout criteria for participants in group 1.

The sources for this report include Illinois sophomore responses to the Sophomore Questionnaire of the High School and Beyond Study, The Sophomore Test Booklet for the High School and Beyond Study, and sophomore dropout responses to the First Follow-up Questionnaire of the 1980 Sophomore Cohort (Not Currently in High School). These studies were funded by the National Center for Education Statistics under a contract with the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago, Illinois. This paper will refer to the Sophomore Questionnaire as the "Sophomore" survey and to the First Follow-up Questionnaire as the "Follow-Up" survey (NORC, 1980, 1982).

## Methods of Determining Estimates

Survey results in this paper were based upon weighted responses. Each survey respondent represented a particular subgroup within the general populations of sophomores and dropouts. Each response was multiplied by a set of constants, called weights, so that the cumulative tabulation of the samples could be used to estimate population totals or other parameters such as means (NORC, 1983).

The Illinois sophomore sample from the Sophomore survey of the High School and Beyond Study numbered 1,950. The responses were weighted to represent 195,451 sophomores. This was the estimated total sophomore enrollment for Illinois public and nonpublic high schools in the spring of 1980. The actual enrollment of Illinois sophomores in 1980 was 196,036 as reported by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Respondents to the Sophomore survey were also included in the Follow-up survey. A portion of these responses were weighted, using base-year weights, to represent an estimated number of sophomores who eventually would drop out of school by the spring of 1982. These 166 initial respondents were weighted to represent 25,800 individuals.

In general, a two-step process was used to establish response weights. The first step was the calculation of a preliminary weight. Those were based upon the inverse of the probabilities of selection through the various stages of the sampling process. The second step was a weight used to adjust for nonresponse. Questions regarding the details of the weight assignment process used in the Sophomore survey and the Follow-up survey should be addressed to the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago, Illinois.

## Findings

### Student Characteristics

This section describes the sex and racial-ethnic composition of dropouts from the 1980 Illinois sophomore class. The students identified as dropouts left school between the spring of 1980 and the spring of 1982. Illinois dropouts rates for the student characteristics as compared with national findings (Peng, 1982) are summarized in Table 1.

An estimated 13.2% of the 1980 Illinois sophomore class dropped out of school between 1980 and 1982. This percentage was slightly less than the nation-wide estimate of 13.7% (Peng, 1982).

Over one-half of the dropouts were females. However, male students proportionately were more likely to drop out than female students, 14.2% male vs. 10.7% female. The sex differential in the dropout rates for Illinois was greater than that reported nationally (U.S.: males 14.7% vs. females 12.6%).

Dropout rates from the sophomore to senior year for Hispanic and Black students in Illinois were the highest among the five major racial-ethnic groups. Hispanic students had a 25.9% dropout rate and Black students had a 24.8% dropout rate in Illinois. The Illinois dropout rates for these groups were substantially greater than rates reported nation-wide (U.S.: Hispanic, 18.0% and Black, 17.0%).

The dropout rate for Illinois students of American Indian or Alaskan Native descent was 15.2%. White students had a 10.2% dropout rate. No Asian or Pacific Islander students in Illinois were identified as dropouts from the 1980 Sophomore survey. From the 1982 Follow-up survey, however, some Asian males were identified as high school dropouts. These students made up less than 1/2 of 1% of the Illinois dropout population identified in the Follow-up survey. The Illinois dropout rates for these groups were lower than the national rates (U.S.: American Indian/Alaskan Native, 29.2%; White, 12.2%; and Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.1%).

Table 1 Gender and Ethnic Characteristics of the 1980 Illinois Sophomore Class

| Characteristic | % of Illinois Sophomores | Percent of Sophomores Who Dropped Out | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | in Illinois | in U.S.* |
| Sex | | | |
| Female | 50.6% | 10.7% | 12.6% |
| Male | 49.4% | 14.2% | 14.7% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | |
| White, non-Hispanic | 76.7% | 10.2% | 12.2% |
| Black | 14.4% | 24.8% | 17.0% |
| Hispanic | 6.2% | 25.9% | 18.0% |
| Asian American | 1.3% | 0.0% | 3.1% |
| American Indian/ Alaskan Native | 0.5% | 15.2% | 29.2% |
| Ethnicity Unknown | 0.9% | 14.1% | Not available |
| All Sophomores | 100.0% | 13.2% | 13.6% |

Note: The estimated number of students in the 1980 Illinois Sophomore Class was 195,451.

*National data from Peng (1982).

Reasons for Dropping Out

Dropouts from the 1980 Illinois sophomore class were asked in 1982 their reasons for quitting school. This section describes the Illinois responses to this question and compares them to dropout responses collected nation-wide (Peng, 1982). For comparative purposes, a major reason for quitting school is defined as a reason given by 10% or more of the male or female respondents or both. Respondents were allowed to report more than one reason for quitting school.

Poor grades in school were cited more often by Illinois dropouts than any other reason given for quitting school (males, 50% and females, 49%). Poor grades were also cited more often by Illinois dropouts than reported nation-wide (U.S.: males, 36% and females, 30%).

Other school-related problems considered by Illinois male and female dropouts to be major reasons for quitting school included: "school was not for me" (33% male, 28% female) and "couldn't get along with teachers" (26%

male, 11% female). Being expelled or suspended from school was considered a major reason for quitting school by male dropouts, but not by female dropouts (18% male, 5% female). These reasons were also cited by dropouts nationally in similar proportions as shown in Table 2.

Family-related problems, particularly pregnancy, were considered major reasons for leaving school by female dropouts and, to a lesser degree, for male dropouts. Family-related problems included pregnancy (females only 31%), marriage or plans to marry (females 19%, males 5%), and support of a family (females 7%, males 13%). Though dropouts nationally cited family-related problems as major reasons for leaving school, female dropouts stressed marriage over pregnancy as a primary school problem (U.S. females: pregnancy, 23% and marriage, 31%). Table 2 details the family-related reasons for quitting school.

Employment-related problems were also cited as major reasons for leaving school in Illinois. Job offers were cited as a major reason by both male and female dropouts (males 16%, females 10%). Sixteen percent of the male dropouts gave a desire to enter the military as a major reason for quitting school. Only job offers were considered a major employment-related reason for quitting school nationally (U.S.: males 27%, females 11%). Data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Reasons for Dropping Out

| Reasons for Dropping Out | Illinois Dropouts | | U.S. Dropouts* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| **School-related** | | | | |
| 1. Poor grades | 50% | 49% | 36% | 30% |
| 2. School not for me | 33% | 28% | 35% | 31% |
| 3. Couldn't get along with teachers | 26% | 11% | 21% | 10% |
| 4. Expelled or suspended | 18% | 5% | 13% | 5% |
| 5. Didn't get desired program | 6% | 2% | 8% | 5% |
| 6. Moved too far from school | 0% | 5% | 2% | 5% |
| 7. School too dangerous | 1% | 2% | 3% | 2% |
| **Family-related** | | | | |
| 1. Pregnancy | N/A | 31% | N/A | 23% |
| 2. Married or planned to | 5% | 19% | 7% | 31% |
| 3. Had to support family | 13% | 7% | 14% | 8% |
| **Employment-related** | | | | |
| 1. Offered job | 16% | 10% | 27% | 11% |
| 2. Wanted to enter military | 16% | 0% | 7% | 1% |
| **Peer-related** | | | | |
| 1. Couldn't get along with students | 1% | 3% | 5% | 6% |
| 2. Friends were dropping out | 2% | 1% | 7% | 2% |
| **Health-related** | | | | |
| 1. Illness or disability | 0% | 6% | 5% | 7% |
| **Other reasons** | | | | |
| 1. Wanted to travel | 4% | 5% | 7% | 7% |

Note: Respondents to First Follow-up Questionnaire could indicate more than one reason for leaving school.

*National data from Peng (1982).

## School-Related Problems of Dropouts

Many Illinois dropouts cited school-related problems as major reasons for leaving school before graduation. This section compares sophomores who left high school with sophomores who continued high school with respect to student grade averages, achievement, school attendance, student discipline, and student attitudes toward school.

Sophomores who quit school generally were lower achievers academically than sophomores who continued high school. Table 3 shows that most dropouts, 52%, reported performing below a C average academically while the majority of continuing students (71%) reported a grade average above the C level. Twenty-six percent of the dropouts reported grades above the C level.

Table 3 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Grades Reported in School

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Reported Grades in High School | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) More than C's | 71% |
| | | b) = C's | 17% |
| | | c) Less than C's | 12% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) More than C's | 26% |
| | | b) = C's | 22% |
| | | c) Less than C's | 52% |

Scores from a composite reading, math, and vocabulary test, included as part of the 1980 Sophomore survey, showed that 85% of the students who dropped out scored at or below the test median, while 45% of the continuing students scored at this level (shown in Table 4).

Table 4 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Composite Test Scores from the High School and Beyond Survey

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Math and Reading Test Scores | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) equal to or less than median score | 45% |
| | | b) greater than median score | 55% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) equal to or less than median score | 85% |
| | | b) greater than median score | 15% |

Absenteeism and tardiness from school were more prevalent among sophomores who quit school than among sophomores who continued school. Table 5 shows that 61% of the students who dropped out were absent 3 or more days during the 1979 fall semester as opposed to 26% of the continuing students. Table 6 shows dropouts were also more likely to be late to school 3 or more days (dropouts, 42%; continuing students, 22%). Most dropouts, 58%, reported cutting classes as compared to 22% of the continuing students (shown in Table 7). These findings suggest that before students quit school, they become less likely to attend school.

Table 5 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Number of Days Absent from School between the Beginning of School Last Fall (1979) and Christmas Vacation

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Days Absent from School | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) None | 43% |
| | | b) 1-2 days | 31% |
| | | c) 3 or more days | 26% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) None | 17% |
| | | b) 1-2 days | 22% |
| | | c) 3 or more days | 61% |

Table 6 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Number of Days Late to School between the Beginning of School Last Fall (1979) and Christmas Vacation

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Days Late to School | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) None | 50% |
| | | b) 1-2 days | 28% |
| | | c) 3 or more days | 22% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) None | 33% |
| | | b) 1-2 days | 25% |
| | | c) 3 or more days | 42% |

Table 7 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Proportion of Classes Cut

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Did Student Cut Classes? | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) True | 22% |
| | | b) False | 78% |
| Students who dropped out before 6/82 | 14% | a) True | 58% |
| | | b) False | 42% |

Increased absenteeism and tardiness may imply a lack of interest in or dissatisfaction with school and school work. Forty-five percent of the dropouts reported not being interested in school as opposed to 21% of the continuing students (shown in table 8). The majority of dropouts, 68%, reported being dissatisfied with their education as opposed to 32% of the continuing students (shown in table 9). With regard to homework, (shown in Table 10), 65% of the dropouts reported spending less than 3 hours per week on homework, while 60% of the continuing students reported spending 3 or more hours per week on homework. These findings were consistent with dropout reports (Table 2) that a major reason for quitting school was a dislike for being in school.

Table 8 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Expressed Interest in School

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Student's Interest in School | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) Interested in school | 79% |
| | | b) Not interested in school | 21% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) Interested in school | 55% |
| | | b) Not interested in school | 45% |

Table 9 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Expressed Satisfaction with Education

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Student Satisfaction with Education | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) Satisfied with way education is going | 68% |
| | | b) Not satisfied with way education is going | 32% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) Satisfied with way education is going | 32% |
| | | b) Not satisfied with way education is going | 68% |

Table 10 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Amount of Time Spent on Homework

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Time Spent on Homework Levels | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) Less than 3 hrs/week | 39% |
| | | b) 3 or more hrs/week | 60% |
| | | c) None Assigned | 1% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) Less than 3 hrs/week | 65% |
| | | b) 3 or more hrs/week | 34% |
| | | c) None Assigned | 1% |

Sophomores who eventually dropped out of school were more likely to report being subject to disciplinary actions at school than sophomores who continued school. Thirty-one percent of the dropouts reported being suspended or put on school probation. In contrast, only 8% of the continuing students reported being suspended or put on probation (shown in table 11). Though only male dropouts reported suspension as a major reason for quitting school, this factor may also be associated with dropouts reporting an inability to get along with teachers. Teachers are usually the first disciplinary contact a student would encounter at school.

Table 11 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Proportion of Suspensions or Probations

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Students Suspended or on School Probation | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) True | 8% |
| | | b) False | 92% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) True | 31% |
| | | b) False | 69% |

Family Characteristics and Expectations of Dropouts

In this section, sophomores who eventually dropped out are compared with their classmates who continued school with respect to the educational attainment of parents, family income, marital status, and marriage/child-bearing expectations.

The 1980 Sophomore survey included questions regarding the educational attainment of the student's parents as well as the family incomes of students. These indices provide a general social-economic measure for comparative purposes. These indices along with parental occupations were scaled to form the SES (social-economic scale) index developed for the High School and Beyond Study (NORC, 1982).

The parents of students who dropped out of school generally had lower educational attainment levels than the parents of students who continued school. Tables 12 and 13 show the educational attainment levels of students' fathers and mothers, respectively. A major difference in fathers' educational attainment for dropouts and continuing students was that fathers of dropouts were less likely to have had more than a high school education (dropouts' fathers, 20%; continuing students' fathers, 37%). A noticeable difference between the student groups with respect to mothers' educational attainment was that mothers of dropouts were less likely to have completed high school (dropouts' mothers, 29%; continuing students' mothers, 13%).

Table 12 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Educational Attainment of Father

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Educational Attainment of Father | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) Less than high school | 14% |
| | | b) High School | 27% |
| | | c) More than high school | 37% |
| | | d) Does not live with | 6% |
| | | e) Does not know | 16% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) Less than high school | 18% |
| | | b) High School | 26% |
| | | c) More than high school | 20% |
| | | d) Does not live with | 16% |
| | | e) Does not know | 20% |

Table 13 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Educational Attainment of Mother

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Educational Attainment of Mother | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) Less than high school | 13% |
| | | b) High School | 41% |
| | | c) More than high school | 32% |
| | | d) Does not live with | 1% |
| | | e) Does not know | 13% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) Less than high school | 29% |
| | | b) High School | 31% |
| | | c) More than high school | 15% |
| | | d) Does not live with | 3% |
| | | e) Does not know | 22% |

The family income of dropouts was generally lower than the family income of students who remained in school. Using a family income of $16,000 for comparative purposes, 46% of the dropouts reported incomes below this figure. About 26% of the continuing students reported incomes below this figure (shown in table 14). Parental educational attainment and family incomes suggest that the social-economic conditions were less favorable for dropouts than for continuing students.

Table 14 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Family Income

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N=195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Family Income Levels | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) below $16,000 | 26% |
| | | b) above $16,000 | 74% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) below $16,000 | 46% |
| | | b) above $16,000 | 54% |

In spring 1980, 2.9% of the students who eventually dropped out had reported having their first child. In contrast, 0.3% of the continuing students reported having their first child. The incidence of first-time birth for dropouts was nearly 10 times greater than that of the continuing students before the dropouts left school. By 1982, 8.8% of the male dropouts and 34.9% of the female students reported having one or more children.

Further, students who eventually dropped out generally expected to begin child rearing at an earlier age than continuing students. Table 15 shows that 29% of the dropouts expected to have their first child before age 21, while 13% of the continuing students had this expectation. The higher incidence of first-time birth, the high proportion of female dropouts with children, and the expectation to begin child rearing at an earlier age are consistent with dropout reports that pregnancy was a major reason for quitting school in Illinois (Table 2).

Table 15 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Age Expected to Have First Child

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Age Expect to Have First Child | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) Less than 21 yrs. old | 13% |
| | | b) 21 or more yrs. old | 76% |
| | | c) Does not expect to have children | 11% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) Less than 21 yrs. old | 29% |
| | | b) 21 or more yrs. old | 56% |
| | | c) Does not expect to have children | 15% |

NOTE: The number of continuing students who already had first children was estimated to be 424. The number of dropouts who already had first children was estimated to be 507.

Students who eventually dropped out expected to marry at an earlier age than continuing students. Table 16 shows that 53% of the dropouts compared with 29% of the continuing students expected to marry before age 21 even though some continuing students reported being already married. By 1982, 24% of the female dropouts reported being married while 3% of the male dropouts reported being married or divorced. No female dropouts reported a marital status of divorced.

Table 16 Comparison of Students and Dropouts by Age Expected to Marry

| Illinois Sophomore Cohorts Spring, 1980 Estimated N = 195,461 | Percent of Cohorts | Age Expected to Marry | Percent Per Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who remained in school until 6/82 | 86% | a) Less than 21 yrs. old | 29% |
| | | b) 21 or more yrs. old | 63% |
| | | c) Does not expect to marry | 7% |
| Students who dropped out of school before 6/82 | 14% | a) Less than 21 yrs. old | 53% |
| | | b) 21 or more yrs. old | 37% |
| | | c) Does not expect to marry | 11% |

NOTE: The number of continuing students who were already married was estimated to be 321.

## Summary

Consistent with their stated reasons for leaving school, many students faced major school-related problems before dropping out. Dropouts were more likely to report failing academically, being absent or tardy from school, lacking interest in school, and being subject to disciplinary actions as compared to students who continued school.

The data presented show that 25% of the Hispanic and Black sophomores eventually dropped out of school. These students in Illinois had a substantially greater risk of dropping out than students of other racial-ethnic characteristics. The Illinois dropout rate for these students exceeded the national rates. The differences in dropout rates for male and female students in Illinois were greater than that reported nation-wide.

For many dropouts, school-related problems such as poor grades, a dislike for school, an inability to get along with teachers, and suspension from school were given as major reasons for leaving school. Other dropouts reported economic and social pressures such as pregnancy, marriage, job offers and family support as major reasons for quitting school. These reasons were also cited by dropouts nation-wide, but the emphasis on poor grades and pregnancy distinguished Illinois dropouts from the rest of the national dropout population.

Students in depressed social-economic conditions were more likely to drop out than students from families of higher social-economic status. The parental educational attainment and family incomes of dropouts were generally lower than that of continuing students. Dropouts were more likely to report that their parents had not graduated from high school.

Family-related problems, particularly pregnancy, were acute for students who eventually dropped out. Over one-third of the female dropouts interviewed in 1982 reported having one or more children. Teenage pregnancy appears to be a major reason that female students drop out.

The data presented were not sufficient to conclude that a particular student with the previous characteristics would drop out of school, but these student characteristics may serve as warning signals for at-risk youth.

In particular, these characteristics are poor academic performance, absence from school for 3 or more days, lack of high school completion by one or both parents, and for females, pregnancy before graduation.

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